



TRUE 'CUE NEWS

From the Campaign for Real Barbecue

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No. 10

Two New Patrons

We are delighted to add two names to the list of distinguished writers and critics who support the Campaign and its mission:

Steven Raichlen will surely be known to readers of this newsletter. A member of the Barbecue Hall of Fame and a PBS TV host, he has written [30 books](#), which have been translated into 17 languages sold more than four million copies, and garnered five James Beard Awards and three IACP-Julia Child Awards. He is also the founder of [Barbecue University](#) at the Broadmoor in Colorado Springs. You can read more about him [here](#).

Mark A. Johnson is the author of [An Irresistible History of Alabama Barbecue: From Wood Pit to White Sauce](#). He is a U. S. historian who specializes in Southern and African American history.

Consensus

When Fox News recently asked a number of professional barbecue cooks for “signs that you’re at a bad barbecue joint,” the first of the [five signs](#) they came up with is no smoke. “Every one of the chefs and pitmasters agreed that if you can’t see or smell a smoker, there’s a chance you’re being taken for a fool.”

True 'Cue in the News

In a lengthy [cover story](#) on the current popularity of barbecue, the *Christian Science Monitor* mentioned the Campaign for Real Barbecue and quoted your editor on the gasser menace.

The article also included this marvelous picture of a barbecue competition in Chongqing, China:



Certifying 100% Wood-cookers

The Campaign's program of certification continues apace, with places being added to (and sometimes, unfortunately, removed from) the rosters for North Carolina, South Carolina, and Kentucky. For current listings, see [here](#), and check out our [Facebook page](#) for more information.

One recent certification was of R&S Barbecue in Tompkinsville, Kentucky. The photograph at right shows Anita Hamilton, the owner, flanked by Wes Berry, Campaign Patron and Kentucky Regional Smoke Detector (left) and your editor (right). The woodpiles are not just for show.



Tompkinsville, a town with four barbecue restaurants for 3000 people, is the epicenter of a microregion where thin steaks are cut from pork shoulders, wood-cooked, and served with a vinegar-based sauce. (The town also has a Dairy Queen that advertises "Kansas City Pulled Pork" – but that's wrong in so many ways.)



A Golden Opportunity in the Golden State

[Memphis Minnie's](#) Bar-B-Que Joint in San Francisco is one of only two Campaign-certified restaurants outside the Carolinas and Kentucky.

Founded by the late Bob Kantor, it has been wood-cooking great barbecue on Haight Street since 2000. Since Bob's untimely death it has been owned by his widow Gail Wilson and run by the capable general manager Tom Campbell, but Gail now lives in North Carolina and Tom and his wife Jacki want to leave the Bay Area, so Gail has reluctantly put the place up for sale.

Does anyone want to own a profit-making barbecue place with a brand new J&R smoker? In San Francisco? Seriously, if you're interested or know anyone who

might be, drop us a line at truecue@gmail.com and we'll put you in touch with Gail. She is more than willing to deal with someone who would keep it a barbecue joint, rather than turn it into a pizza parlor.



Real Barbecue

Since 1991 Little Richard's Lexington BBQ in Winston-Salem has been one of the great exemplars of North Carolina's wood-cooked Piedmont-style tradition. Now Richard Berrier, the owner, has sold exclusive use of the Little Richard's name and logo to some electric-cookers who run another Little Richard's in Clemmons. Berrier will continue to run his Winston-Salem place and another one in Wallburg under the name [Real Q](#).

We liked his barbecue before, and like it even better now with its new name. (Thanks to Bob McNair for this story.)



Speaking of Little Richard's . . .

There's good news and bad news from Winston-Salem.

The bad news is that some anonymous vigilante has been waging a [campaign](#) against the smoke from Little Richard's pits, complaining to the county environmental protection department that "The plume ... at Mr. Richards [sic] contains hickory smoke laden with grease from burned hogs and hush puppy grease." (Yum.)

The good news is that he was told essentially that the county can't do much about smoke coming from restaurants. The Clean Air Act applies only to industrial facilities and processes, the director of the department said. "We'd be guilty of governmental overreach if we tried to enforce industrial standards on restaurants." (How great to hear the phrase "governmental overreach" from a government official!)

And Speaking of Government Regulation of Smoke

The [True Cue Challenge](#) still stands. Going on four years.

News from the Islands

Vacationers on the North Carolina coast might want to check out the [Ocracoke Oyster Company](#), on Ocracoke Island. After a dozen raw (or otherwise) for starters, you can have Real Barbecue for your entrée. Not only is the oyster-barbecue combination unusual, the barbecue is cooked with wood from the island's wild fig trees. (The Campaign for Real Barbecue got an appreciative mention awhile back in an [article](#) about the place.)

Meanwhile, further south, [Maxwell's Bluegrass and Barbeque](#), on Pawley's Island, South Carolina, has closed for lack of business. We regret the closing of any wood-cooker, and Maxwell's was one. But they served "Texas-style" barbecue. We can't help wondering if they'd still be in business if they'd cooked South Carolina-style.

Merch of the Month

As our website says, “Like Real Barbecue itself, True ‘Cue is a labor of love. The costs of operating True ‘Cue – printing materials for certifications, promoting the website, web hosting, driving throughout the state to certify restaurants, etc. – are borne by the site’s co-founders.” We welcome contributions, of course, but we haven’t had any. You can help by purchasing branded merchandise from Zazzle.com.

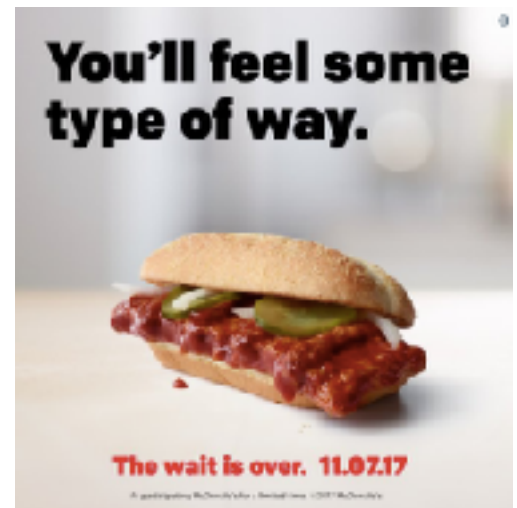
This issue, we direct your attention to this handsome apron. You can buy one [here](#).



It's Baaaaaack!

The ultimate Faux ‘Cue, has [returned](#). There are many theories about why the McRib comes and goes (here’s [one](#)), but there’s no question that it has a following that gets really excited when it reappears.

We kind of admire McDonald’s chutzpah for serving something so egregiously and unapologetically faux. Chances are you’ve never eaten one, so we did it for you, and we can report that, although the sauce is actually an acceptable Kansas City-style number, the mysterious composite meat-like molded product it adorns is downright scary.



What You Need

You need a job so you can make some money.

You need a nice warm place to stay.

A sense of humor ‘cause life is funny.

A big stick to keep the wolves away.

You need a car with good tires on it

And the right place to eat barbecue.

A heavy-duty set of jumper cables

And no holes in your walkin’ shoes.

(From “Somebody to Love You,” by Delbert McClinton)

Upstate New York Barbecue

Upstate New York isn't known for its cuisine (Rochester's "[garbage plate](#)" aside). In particular, it's not known for its barbecue. But maybe it should be. Meathead Goldwyn at [AmazingRibs.com](#) has a fascinating [post](#) about "Cornell Chicken," a method for cooking broilers over charcoal with a vinegar-based basting sauce, introduced by Dr. Bob Baker, professor of food science at Cornell, in a 1950 [extension bulletin](#). (For more history, see [here](#).)

Meathead provides a slightly modified and improved recipe for the chicken, as well as recipes for other Upstate specialties like Syracuse Salt Potatoes, Waldorf Slaw, and Concord Grape Pie.

Incidentally, Dr. Baker went on to develop a prototype chicken nugget.



A 1975 chicken barbecue fundraiser for the Fire department. FRANK L. ALLEN/ANDREW Z. HARRIS/STILL

The Secret Life of Hank Hill #2



Death of a Pitmaster

Here's an appreciation of a life-long barbecue man, by Patron Rien Fertel, author of *The One True Barbecue*. Be sure to watch the video that Rien links to.

Restaurant kitchens are full of unsung heroes, obscurity toilers, invisible workers like Douglas Oliver, who died last month. For over three decades, Douglas worked as a pitmaster at Sweatman's Bar-B-Que in Holly Hill, SC. He called himself a "worker ant."

Work was cooking whole-hog barbecue. Back in 2012, he invited me to stay up all night and watch him labor. It was brutal, tedious work: shoveling fresh coals under the hogs every 20 minutes from well before dusk to just after dawn.

"Peace and quiet," kept him here, he told me. A place to "think about the past and the future." A place to "keep your head on straight." Here's excerpts from an interview I did with him: <https://youtu.be/xrHhJwG2yxo>

Douglas was born on a neighboring plantation farm, the son of sharecroppers. He started at Sweatman's right out of high school. Back then they fell their own trees for fuel. In 1989, he kept cooking as Hurricane Hugo toppled tree after tree surrounding the pithouse.

When a very famous television cooking personality stopped by with a film crew, he ignored Douglas. When the episode aired, a manager (white, likely never cooked a hog in his entire life) was given credit for Oliver's work. For that, I insisted that he appear on the cover of my book.

Douglas calculated that he had cooked over 50,000 hogs (at 150-175 lbs. apiece) in his life. Still, he refused to call himself a pitmaster. He was "just a cook," he told me. "That's it. Just a cook trying to do the right thing, trying to cook something good."

The barbecue in this part of South Carolina comes slathered in mustard sauce — golden in color. The sauce has never been my favorite, but on my first night with Douglas pinched a morsel of meat from the hog, still sizzling on the pit."

As I write in my book: "He held this piece upward, like a mother bird feeding her nestlings, like a prospector examining his discovery in the light, this pure golden nugget glowing in the dark pit house, and handed it over to me." It was the best single bite of barbecue I have ever eaten.

He had been sick for several years. His body was wracked, inside and out, from a life shoveling fire, inhaling smoke and grease. Douglas Oliver passed away on October 30, at the age of 56. He fed hundreds of thousands.



“Take One Unicorn. . . .”

Ever wonder how to barbecue a unicorn? A recently discovered cookbook by Geoffrey Fule, who cooked for the Queen of England in the 1300s, tells you to marinate the beast in cloves and garlic and cook it on a gridiron.



London, British Library, MS Additional 142012, f. 137r.

This [article](#) will tell you more about it, and has some other great illustrations.

Answer to riddle: Kraft barbecue

Please forward this newsletter to anyone you know who might be interested.

Earlier issues of *True 'Cue News* can be found on-line [here](#).

You can also follow us on [Facebook](#).

If you have anything of interest to supporters of Real Barbecue—old places closing or turning to gas, new places opening, obituaries of barbecue legends, whatever—please send it along to TrueCue@gmail.com.

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